



## WASHINGTON STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**43rd DISTRICT**  
**October 1999**

# Representative Ed Murray

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Dear Friends:

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your state representative in Olympia.

I have many of you to thank for 43<sup>rd</sup> District's important and great successes in the Legislature this year. Your good ideas have helped me do my job: working as an advocate for stronger schools; for a healthy environment; for good jobs; and for solutions to housing problems.

While this mailing doesn't mention all of the legislature's accomplishments in 1999, it highlights a few actions that affect you and your neighbors. The newsletter also talks about 43<sup>rd</sup> District residents and their work in Olympia. Citizen activists and neighborhood residents play a vital role in the legislative process, and I'm honored to have worked with you.

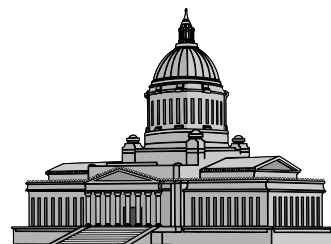
As co-chair of the House Capital Budget Committee, I was able to work with fellow lawmakers in recommending more funding for new schools and assistance for housing programs. As a result, lawmakers passed a strong budget for building projects statewide. Community colleges like Seattle Central will see much-needed improvements. More low-income housing programs will be funded in the 43<sup>rd</sup> District and across the state: these changes will help alleviate abysmal living conditions for some farmworkers and help communities build more low-cost housing that is becoming increasingly scarce.

Thank you once again. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing how we can make our government work better for Washington state.

Sincerely,



**Rep. Ed Murray co-chairs the House Capital Budget Committee, and is a member of the Legislative Transportation Committee.**



**The next session of the Washington Legislature begins January 10, 2000.**

## State helps community colleges

As co-chair of the **House Capital Budget committee**, I helped develop a spending plan to meet the needs of the 43<sup>rd</sup> District and our state. The entire \$2.2 billion plan will support diverse projects such as school construction, repairs at the state's 33 technical and community colleges and two primary research universities and branch campuses, upgrades to state parks, salmon recovery efforts, and low-income housing programs and more.

The hard work of citizen groups, students, and residents of the 43<sup>rd</sup> District helped me greatly as I worked with other lawmakers preparing this crucial spending blueprint. The budget will make many smart investments over the next two years in **repairs and improvements of university and community and technical college buildings**: Statewide, \$229 million will be spent to improve facilities at our two-year schools — the largest amount for repair and improvement ever for community colleges. **Seattle Central will receive \$3.9 million** for building repairs and drama program improvements, as well as enhancements at nearby Lincoln Reservoir (see article below). These investments will help Seattle Central continue serving our diverse community with everything from career training to English language instruction.

## Groundswell: The neighborhood speaks up...

Perishing plants and flourishing weeds. That's what it took to motivate Kay Rood a few years ago to rally her Capitol Hill neighbors into an effort that's paid off with a rejuvenated city playfield and the promise of a new park and open space within a few years. Rood is the chair of the acclaimed group Groundswell Off Broadway that has been working with state and city officials on the revival of the Lincoln Reservoir Park site.

Rood and Groundswell earlier this year persuaded the Legislature's Capital Budget Committee — which I co-chair — to allocate \$250,000 towards design and construction of new facilities at the park. Groundswell previously had generated \$300,000 in city matching grants, private donations, volunteer labor, and leveraged funds for various park improvements.

According to plans, nearly five acres of open space will be created by building a community park over the subsurface tanks of the soon-to-be-reconstructed Lincoln Reservoir. The nearly century-old reservoir and adjoining playfield currently dominate the eleven-acre site near Broadway between East Denny Way and East Pine Street.

"The spirit of Groundswell started in 1993," explained Rood. "I wondered why there were no flowers or color in the park."

The site had been declining for decades — maintenance had fallen off, and weeds and litter were everywhere. "The place was dangerous and unused," she said.

One thing led to another, neighbors put their energy and ideas together, and Groundswell was born. Learning that the nationally eminent Olmsted Brothers firm designed the park in 1904 brought new awareness of the site's history. Group members have been working closely with Seattle Public Utilities, the Parks Department, city officials and local business leaders about the park design and its future. A Park Site Master Plan was created through collaboration between the community and the city.

"This is a good example of what can happen when neighbors and the community work together," said Rood.

Construction on the reservoir is expected to begin in January 2000, and take two years to complete. An unknown element is Sound Transit, which may locate its Capitol Hill transit station near the park's western border. A decision is expected soon.

Meantime, Rood says that the new park with all the trimmings should cost upwards of \$4-to-\$5-million. Funds most likely will be from a combination of public and private sources and may be done in phases.

"Given that Capitol Hill is the most densely populated urban neighborhood on the West Coast, this will be a wise investment," said Rood. "As Seattle continues to grow, the residents of Capitol Hill, Pike/Pine and First Hill desperately need open space."

Rood remains optimistic. "With the replacement of the Lincoln Reservoir," she said, "we have an opportunity not only to create parkland where none existed before, but to get a world-class urban park in the bargain."



**Volunteers working on the Community Perennial Garden at the NE corner of the Lincoln Reservoir Site.**

*(photo courtesy Kay Rood)*

## 43<sup>rd</sup> District housing issues hold Legislature's attention

My thanks go out to the many citizens and housing advocates in Seattle and the 43rd District who have made a difference in the lives of homeless and low-income Washington state residents. "It was a great session," said one long-time activist: the legislature increased the state's investment in housing from about \$55 million per biennium to nearly \$80 million.

This includes: an increase to the Housing Trust Fund to \$60 million; new allocations for farmworker housing (\$8 million); and housing for homeless families (\$5 million). Also part of the package is a new \$5 million fund to preserve moderate-rent housing in King County.

In addition, the legislature for the first time granted property tax relief to low income housing owned by nonprofit groups.

Activists made the difference. Groups such as LATCH (Lutheran Alliance to Create Housing) and others worked hard

to carry the urgent message about housing needs to my colleagues in Olympia. Housing advocate and LATCH Executive Director Kathy Roseth said she and an army of volunteers telephoned, faxed and e-mailed lawmakers over and over again as legislation advanced through the process. "Our goal," she said, "was to make sure the legislators always remembered how important housing was to their constituents amid all the other issues that compete for their attention."

Roseth, a 43<sup>rd</sup> District resident, knows of what she speaks. She's gained an impressive resume of experience over the years from an array of involvement in housing programs from banking to King County's Housing Development Consortium. "My family tradition of public service found a place in housing," she said. Roseth said the economic boom that's created personal wealth for so many



**Citizen housing advocates pause for a photo during a visit to the state capitol.**

*(photo courtesy of LATCH)*

people has caused an escalation of real estate values that's displaced low-wage working people, those with disabilities, seniors and others. "There's a reason the housing issue has become so important," she said.

I admire Roseth's optimism. "We certainly have the resources to end homelessness," she said. "It depends on the will of major employers, and on the public sector to divert resources."

## Traffic: best solutions have minimal footprints

Congestion relief in the 520 corridor remains elusive, yet I'm optimistic that solutions are somewhat closer. I recently completed 14 months of work with the Trans-Lake Washington Study Committee, a 47-member group charged with finding reasonable solutions to improve mobility across and around the north end of Lake Washington. This highly-talented panel of business officials, government representatives and neighborhood citizens has advocated a big list of short and long-term recommendations.

Citizen activists and concerns by neighborhoods have sparked many progressive solutions to congestion problems, and the Trans-Lake group was a case in point. The committee included eight citizen members, including Laurelhurst resident Jean Amick.

"I think the citizens have a clearer picture of neighborhood needs than someone from a distance," said Amick. "It's important to come up with 'win-win' scenarios because everybody gets something."

Amick says citizens need to work closer with business, city and state officials to find the best ways of easing traffic congestion. She advocates what she calls the minimal footprint option: "Improve what we have. I would love to improve mobility without spending a lot of money."

Meantime, a long list of short- and long-term solutions has been recommended. One clear conclusion of the Study Committee is that no single action, by itself, will provide an adequate response to congestion problems.



**You can find more about the Trans-Lake Study on the Web:**

**[www.wsdot.wa.gov/translake](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/translake).  
Stay tuned as the process unfolds.**

***"It's important to come up with 'win-win' scenarios because everybody gets something."***



*"Noise is one of the big issues as we head into the 21st Century"*

## Noise? What did you say? It's too loud!

One of the best parts of my job as state representative is working with citizen groups actively involved with neighborhood improvement efforts. One fine example: the group "NOISE," Neighborhoods Opposed to Interstate Sound Exposure. Led by North Eastlake Business Association President Wes Larson, the 150-person group has been working for two years on plans to improve the quality of life for residents living near the Ship Canal Bridge.

NOISE worked with me on a plan that will provide \$5.2 million on noise mitigation efforts throughout the state, with the bulk of the funds going to neighborhoods adjacent to the Ship Canal Bridge. The funds were

approved by the Legislature earlier this year.

"Noise is one of the big issues as we head into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," said Larson. "It's about quality of life. Everybody has the right to enjoy peace and quiet."

Traffic noise in neighborhoods surrounding the bridge can reach 90 decibels. "It can be louder than Sea-Tac Airport," said Larson.

Part of the legislatively-approved funds will be used to build noise walls along the Boylston-Harvard Corridor. Another chunk of money — \$450,000 — will be used to study the best ways of dealing with reflective noise around the bridge: noise that bounces around the neighborhoods.

Larson's group has also been effective at obtaining a grant from the City of Seattle to hire a consultant in the area of acoustics. It's to assure that whatever eventually is done to mitigate the noise is compatible with the neighborhoods. Larson says the group will also work with the State Department of Transportation. "How state funds will be used depends on community consensus and studies," he said.

I'm working with NOISE as it builds awareness of the need for noise mitigation. Larson agrees that it's an important issue. "We don't think people should have to move outside the city to have a decent quality of life."

**Representative Ed Murray**

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